

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2218

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: 08,5, US, JA
SUBJ: LOCKHEED AFFAIR: DIVIDED OPINIONS ON FURTHER RELEASE OF
INFORMATION

1. INFORMATION DEVELOPED HERE ON FALLOUT OF LOCKHEED
REVELATIONS IN LAST 24 HOURS INCLUDE A SHERMAN DISCUSSION
WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA, DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN
AMBASSADOR AND FONMIN MIYAZAWA AND OTHER USEFUL LOWER
LEVEL CONFERSATIONS. (SEE FOR EXAMPLE REPORT OF CONVERSATION
FEB 12 WITH LDP LOWER HOUSE MEMBER YOHEI KONO SENT SEPTEL.)

2. DURING COURTESY CALL FEB 13, DEPRIMIN FUKUDA TOLD
COUNTRY DIRECTOR SHERMAN (EA/J) THAT SUSPICIONS SURROUNDING
THE LOCKHEED AFFAIR WERE SPREADING RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT JAPAN
AND IN ORDER TO STEM THIS, ALL OF THE FACTS SHOULD BE MADE
AVAILABLE QUICKLY, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT
FOMER CABINET MEMBERS MAY BE INVOLVED. HE NOTED THAT
PROLONGING THE DOUBT COULD ONLY RESULT IN INCREASING LACK
OF CONFIDENCE IN POLITICS. HE HAD JUST COME FROM A
CABINET MEETING AND INDICATED THAT THE CABINET FELT
THE SAME WAY. HE SAID THAT LABOR UNIONS HAD ALREADY
BEGUN TO ORGANIZE CAMPAIGNS TO ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT
AND THAT SUCH CAMPAIGNS, IF NOT QUICKLY QUELLED BY A
DISCLOSURE OF THE FACTS, COULD EVENTUALLY HAVE A
DAMAGING EFFECT ON OVERALL US-JAPAN RELATIONS,
INCLUDING THE SECURITY TREATY. HE REITERATED THE
NECESSITY OF MAKING ALL THE FACTS AVAILABLE QUICKLY.

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3. FUKUDA ALSO NOTED THAT PRESS REPORTS FROM JAPANESE CORRESPONDENTS IN WASHINGTON TO THE EFFECT THAT THE SECRETARY AND FORMER SECRETARY ROGERS PARTICIPATED IN ALLEGED USG EFFORTS TO PREVENT THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ON GROUNDS THAT IT WOULD BE DAMAGING TO US FOREIGN RELATIONS, HAD HAD THE UNFORTUNATE EFFECT HERE OF REINFORCING POPULAR SUSPICIONS THAT IN SOME WAY THE USG AND GOJ WERE WORKING TOGETHER TO WITHHOLD INFORMATION.

4. FUKUDA SAID THAT DUE TO HIS HEALTH, YOSHIO KODAMA WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO APPEAR TO GIVE TESTIMONY AT NEXT WEEK'S DIET HEARINGS. HE DID NOT EXPECT ANY NEW REVELATIONS AT THE HEARINGS, BUT COMMENTED THAT MARUBENI OFFICIALS WERE NOT ACCUSTOMED TO SUCH PROCEEDINGS AND HE COULD NOT BE CERTAIN.

5. FUKUDA'S COMMENTS ECHO A RECNET PUBLIC APPEAL. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FEB 11, FUKUDA IS QUOTED AS PLEDGING AN ALL OUT EFFORT TO BRING OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LOCKHEED SCANDAL AND SAID THAT THE GOJ IS URGING USG TO SUPPLY THE DETAILS OF SENATE INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE AFFAIR. IN URGING FULL DISCLOSURE, FUKUDA IS CERTAINLY NOT UNMINDFUL THAT DISCLOSURE SEEMS LIKELY TO IMPLICATE HIS MAJOR POLITICAL ENEMY.

6. FOREGOING FUKUDA COMMENT MUST BE BALANCED AGAINST COMMENT MADE BY FONMIN TO BE LAST EVENING. FONMIN STATED THAT IN A FEW DAYS GOJ MAY BE "PRESSURED" INTO ASKING USG THROUGH DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO RELEASE NAMES OF IMPLICATED GOJ OFFICIALS IDENTIFIED IN HEARINGS. FONMIN COUNSELLED THAT USG SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT GOJ MUST MAKE PUBLIC WHATEVER INFORMATION IS SUPPLIED OFFICIALLY BY THE USG. FONMIN ADVISED THAT GOJ HAD BEEN CONFERRING INTERNALLY AND BELIEVES RELEASE OF INDIVIDUAL NAMES COULD BE DAMAGING NOT ONLY TO INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED BUT TO GOJ AS A WHOLE.

7. SEEMING CONFLICT EXISTS BETWEEN RELEASING "ALL THE FACTS QUICKLY," AS SUGGEST BY FUKUDA, AND FONMIN STATEMENT THAT RELEASE OF NAMES COULD PROVE "DAMAGING TO GOJ AS A WHOLE." WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO CLARIFY THIS POSSIBLE

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DISCREPANCY, BUT ONE EXPLANATION MAY EXIST IN FUKUDA REFERENCE TO "FACTS." SEVERAL OTHER DISCUSSIONS HERE REVEAL GOJ FEARS RELEASE IN WASHINGTON OF HEARSAY OR INFERRED INFORMATION WHICH IMPLICATES GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

8. OUR ADVICE AT THIS POINT IS THAT WE SHOULD EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION IN RELEASING ANY DATA, ESPECIALLY NAMES, WHERE EVIDENCE OF IMPLICATION IS IN ANY WAY AMBIGUOUS

OR UNVERIFIABLE. IF IT IS POSSIBLE FOR DEPARTMENT TO
TAKE SUCH A POSITION PUBLICLY, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE
HELPFUL IT PROVIDING DEFENSIBLE COUNTER TO WHAT SEEMS
TO BE RISING SENTIMENT IN GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA CIRCLES
HERE THAT USG FAILURE TO RELEASE INFORMATION TANTAMOUNT
TO COMPLICITY IN PROTECTING LDP AND HIGH POLITICAL
FIGURES.
HODGSON

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